



MASAZANE

SOUP KITCHEN & CHILD
PROTECTION PROJECT

February 2022
Omicron's visit is nearly over
but school attendance
remains restricted....

Dear friends and supporters of Masazane Soup Kitchen,

Christmas 2021 came and went in the hot summer weather in Mbekweni! As usual, we were able to take gifts for distribution by the gogos for vulnerable children in their wider care. Judy and I delivered boxes filled with wrapped parcels for 150 children. It may seem strange that we don't make a big occasion (and photo opportunity!) of distributing these parcels, but there is a logic to it.



Firstly, by the time Kate has purchased, assembled, sorted and wrapped the gifts, the schools have usually closed for the summer holidays.

Secondly, by asking the gogos to distribute the parcels, we try to show that Christmas is a time for everyone and avoid the appearance of privileged "city-folk donating to the poor" with the expectation of photographs of smiling children gratefully receiving from our bounty.

When the gogos distribute the gifts to the children, their own status in the community and role as care-givers is enhanced. Each year, each gogo is asked to prepare a list of children in their wider care who would benefit from our Christmas parcels. We have an amazing record of children who have been on our 'lists' since the project started in 2012.

As for the contents of each parcel, we always ask the gogos for guidance as to what the appropriate gifts should be. Since our state schools ask parents to provide basic stationery, this is always a priority item, so we buy pens, pencils, erasers, pencil sharpeners, glue sticks and the hard cover book required by the school. Most of us would either expect schools to provide such basic items, or just pay for what is needed, but so many of South Africa's poorer citizens just do not have the cash for these items at the end of a long January month, and the gifts are warmly welcomed. In previous years, we also provided some basic hygiene items. This year, the gogos suggested that a durable pencil case for each child would be a nice substitute, so these were included in the parcel, along with the usual treat of some sweets.



Schools have now started back after the summer holidays, but national Covid regulations mean that school attendance is still limited, given the need for social distancing. Many children attend school only every second day on a rotational basis, since under 'normal' circumstances, classrooms are overcrowded. Classes of 60 children are not exceptional. While we are so glad that they are back at school, we continue to be most concerned that the education of the poorest children in our country continues to be disrupted. Very few of them have access to electronic devices for online study (or the airtime needed) that their privileged counterparts have, and Covid's effects will be sorely felt by this generation. There are worrying reports of rising numbers of school drop-outs. We have been thankful to our sister organisation, Outliers (www.outliers.org.za) who have provided learning materials for children during this time of disrupted education.

We continue to be enormously grateful to our donors, who show their support to us. **Thank you!** We look forward to continuing this important work of providing basic nutrition to the most vulnerable children in our corner of Mbekweni.

We are so grateful for what you have done for this project thus far, and look forward to a continued partnership with you as we try to ensure that some of the most vulnerable children receive the protection and nutrition that they need at this time of great need in South Africa.

Our special thanks go to our supporters and donors:

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Donations to:

Masazane Soup Kitchen and Child Protection Project

First National Bank

Rondebosch

Account number: 62783960894

Swift code: FIRZAJJ

NPO: 207-414

Please request a tax receipt from us should this be helpful.

We are thankful for the support from Rondebosch United Church, Cape Town, through their Samaritan Partners Trust, contributions from church services, and ongoing prayer support.

Masazane Soup Kitchen

c/o Rondebosch United Church

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www.rondeboschunited.org